



Lambda Letters Project

32581

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August, 1996

6212 Silverton Way, Carmichael, California 95608

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Lambda Letters at the Crossroads

Lavender Library, Archives
and Cultural Exchange
Sacramento, CA

Lambda Letters—and that means all of you—has delivered almost 33,000 letters to elected officials this year. As a result, we and you are becoming major players in the political battles that affect our daily lives. There is no other organization in California that provides such a consistent and large volume of mail to elected officials on the issues that concern our community. You and everyone of us can be very proud of that fact!

Yet Lambda Letters is living through a very difficult period in its life. We face severe challenges in the near future that could cripple the organization.

Let me explain. We have a very small board of directors (just seven members) and a small staff. Only one of the staff works full-time for Lambda Letters and many double as board and staff members.

Most organizations like ours have fund-raising and public information chairs, each with a committee to provide support. Currently no one concentrates on these functions and there are no support committees to work in either of these areas.

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A Letter from Our Treasurer

Dear Lambda Letters Members,

On behalf of the board of directors and staff members, I want to express our appreciation for your financial support, particularly this past month. While our financial problems are not all behind us, we have been able to meet our bills.

I would also like to make a comment to those members who seem to feel that their \$5 (or less) contributions are insignificant. If our 800 members each contributed just \$3 monthly, we would have income of over \$28,000 a year, which would enable us to add members, expand programs, and be more responsive to critical issues in the Legislature or Congress via e-mail, Lambdagrams, and our letters.

Obviously many of our members (low income, retired, students, etc.) cannot afford even \$3 monthly. That is where we who *can* afford it should come in and be glad to make up the difference. Don't belittle your financial support, however small it may seem to you. It is important to us.

Ray Leber
Treasurer

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Lambda Letters Progress Report

Letters Collected

June, 1996	5,602 letters
In all of 1996	32,829 letters

Dollars Spent

June, 1996	\$1,473
In all of 1996	\$10,716

Can You Help?

Please support the very important work of the Lambda Letters Project with your contributions.

The Lambda Letters Newsletter is published monthly except in December by the
Lambda Letters Project Inc.,
6212 Silverton Way, Carmichael, CA 95608.
Postmaster: send address changes to the address above.

Lambda Letters Project

Statement of Purpose

To promote people of color, feminist, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and HIV/AIDS status advocacy and to bring people of color, women, lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgendered persons, and persons affected by or living with HIV/AIDS into full participation in the mainstream of American society now, exercising all the privileges and responsibilities thereof.

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Confidentiality

The Lambda Letters Project does not sell or loan its mailing list to anyone. We give no information about who is, or is not, a member of the Project. We do, occasionally, send mailings on behalf of other worthwhile organizations, but this is done by our own volunteers so that no other organization has the opportunity to copy our mailing lists.

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The War on Domestic Violence: Action Update

The White House reports that during the first twelve weeks of operation for the National 24-Hour Domestic Violence Hotline—at (800) 799-SAFE—21,000 callers received immediate crisis intervention, counseling, and referrals to local sources of help. The hotline was established as part of the Violence Against Women Act—a real victory in the fight against domestic violence.

In other news, Rep. Lucille Royal-Allard (D-Los Angeles) is mobilizing bipartisan support for House Concurrent Resolution 57, which urges that any reforms of welfare programs take into account the special needs of victims of domestic violence. Programs such as Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and low-income housing are often the only way out for poor women and children. This legislation is the result of a study recently released by the Taylor Institute, entitled *Prisoners of Abuse: Domestic Violence and Welfare Receipt*. This study found that between 50–60 percent of participants interviewed in public assistance programs in 20 states reported past or current experiences of domestic violence. Case examples document various forms of sabotage of women by male partners seeking to further their education or obtain employment. The report concludes that fast-tracking women from welfare to work could result in increased violence in homes where domestic violence already exists.

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In Sacramento County

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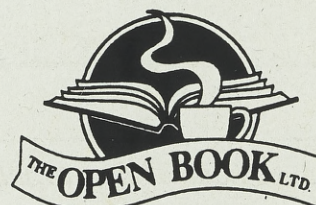
Gay Marriage Battle Intensifies at State and Federal Levels

The battle to prevent legislation restricting marriage to a “union solely between a man and a woman” is intensifying at both the federal and state levels. In Congress, the House has passed—by a large margin—the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) and the Senate version of the bill is soon to be heard by the Senate Judiciary Committee. DOMA would authorize any state to enact laws prohibiting the recognition of a same-gender marriage entered into another state. It would also prohibit spouses of a same-gender marriage from receiving federal benefits awarded to married couples. These include Social Security survivor benefits, veteran’s benefits, and the ability to file joint tax returns.

For the record, Senator Feinstein’s office states that she is opposed to DOMA. However, she is avoiding the real issue. She says that the issue of gay marriage should be decided by each state and that Congress should not interfere with state issues.

In the July 12 House floor vote on DOMA, supporters outnumbered opponents 342 to 67. Voting yes were 224 Republicans and 118 Democrats. Voting no were 1 Republican, 65 Democrats, and 1 Independent. There were two Democrats that voted “present.” The California Caucus voted to support DOMA, with 30 members voting yes and 22 opposed. The votes by

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Opposing C.C.R.I.

Please write to either Senator Dianne Feinstein or Los Angeles Mayor Richard Riordan and ask them to publicly and frequently oppose the so-called California Civil Rights Initiative (C.C.R.I.). This initiative will be on the ballot in California this November. If possible, please compose your own letter, because personalized letters are *much more effective* than form letters. You can use the facts in this article and the enclosed sample letter as resources for composing your letter. The stated purpose of the C.C.R.I. is to amend the constitution of the State of California to prohibit discrimination or preferential treatment by the state and other public entities. In short, it would end all affirmative action programs in all state and local governments in California.

It is interesting to note that the California Department of Justice (DOJ) has proposed changing the name of the initiative to a "Prohibition Against Discrimination or Preferential Treatment By the State and Other Public Entities." The DOJ is required by law to review each proposed initiative and issue a title that "explains the chief purpose and points of the measure." The Department determined that the title C.C.R.I. didn't do it. So they have renamed it. Apparently the DOJ doesn't think this initiative is about protecting civil rights either.

Here's why this issue is so important. Affirmative action was begun in the late 1960s and early 1970s because people realized that women and ethnic minorities were being denied equal access to jobs, government contracts, and educa-

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ADAP to Receive Increase from Federal, State, Other Sources in '96-97

Funding for California's AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP) has been increased \$19.4 million, for a total budget of \$36.9 million. Governor Pete Wilson signed the 1996-97 state budget into law on July 15, doubling the amount he previously had requested for HIV/AIDS funding.

An increase in funding was included in Governor Wilson's revised budget issued in May, but the Lambda Letters Project and other AIDS public policy groups felt that figure was still inadequate. Immediately, the Lambda Letters Project collected and delivered 1,046 letters in support of additional funding to key elected officials. Joining the fight, Senator Mike Thompson (D-Napa Valley) and Assemblywoman Carole Migden (D-San Francisco) assisted in securing an additional \$1.5 million in state General Fund support.

The funding battle ended with a surprisingly upbeat swing after what began as a gloomy political year. With a cumulative total of 88,740 AIDS cases reported in California since the beginning of the epidemic, and with 10,989 cases reported in California in the past year, the increased funding will dramatically affect the lives of those with AIDS, their care givers, and their loved ones:

FY 1995-96 (current) budget:	\$8.4 mil., Ryan White Title II \$9.1 mil., General Fund
FY 1996-97 increase:	\$8 mil. additional, Ryan White \$6.5 mil. additional, General Fund \$3.5 mil., pharmaceutical manufacturer rebates \$1.4 mil., Title II local consortia
Total for ADAP:	\$36.9 mil.

Bloodsports and HIV

The recent revelation that former heavyweight champion Tommy Morrison was not allowed to fight in Nevada because he tested positive for HIV has focused significant attention on the issue of HIV and boxing. Prior to Morrison's announcement, only Nevada and Oregon required boxers to get HIV tested. Since then, numerous states have proposed similar requirements, including New York and Massachusetts.

Now the State Athletic Commission has sponsored A.B. 2472, which would require any person applying for a license or the renewal of a license as a professional boxer or martial arts fighter to provide documentary evidence that he or she has received a negative HIV and HBV (hepatitis B) test 30 days prior to the date of the application or renewal. This legislation, authored by Assemblymember Bill Hoge (R-Pasadena), would also provide that this information and any other medical information concerning the applicant or licensee be confidential. However, it would be subject to subpoena.

A.B. 2472 has passed the Assembly and is expected to pass by the Senate with ease. It is not known what Governor Wilson's stance is on this bill.

Boxing is an extremely bloody sport. While some people feel that the risk to other boxers is small, there is no epidemiological evidence to support or deny this claim. Similarly, there is no evidence to support any claim that the risk is high. The problem is one of numbers. According to the *Los Angeles Times* (2/13/96), about 2,100 boxers have been tested for HIV in Nevada since 1988. Tommy Morrison was only the second boxer to test positive. Therefore, the number of

fight between an infected boxer and a susceptible boxer are far too small to provide a scientific estimate of risk. With such limited data and the care that most institutions now take to avoid blood contact, the assessment of risk remains a guessing game. Yet most sports physicians and trainers recognize there is some risk from blood contact and take all precautions to avoid exposure, wearing rubber gloves when sealing wounds or covering abrasions. They view their actions as common-sense behavior.

The issue of testing for HIV has also been addressed by the Florida State Athletic Commission more than once. Most recently, the Commission received a report from Dr. Jack Guggino in conjunction with his latest findings regarding the possibility of transmission of HIV from boxer to boxer, or boxer to corner people, during the course of a game.

Frailty of the virus on exposure to air and lack of a single case in which transmission of the virus has been attributed to boxing activities resulted in the conclusion that the possibility of such transmission taking place was infinitesimal and therefore did not warrant testing at this time.

It is interesting to note that other sports that include contact bring about bleeding. Yet there is no mandatory HIV testing taking place within these sports. Certainly an argument can be made that participants in hockey, basketball, football, wrestling, etc. could also be a risk factor. Then again, there is no cry to have them tested. During the past several years, there was unsuccessful proposed legislation to test health care providers. If any segment of society is to be singled out and tested, there is little doubt that some members of that group would test positive for

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Hate Crimes Statistics Act Reauthorized . . . For Now

In late June legislation reauthorizing the Hate Crimes Statistics Act was passed unanimously by the United States Senate and the House of Representatives. It was passed as an amendment to the Church Arson Prevention Act. That act was in response to the wave of arsons being committed against black churches this year. The bill was signed by President Clinton on July 3rd.

This bill reauthorized legislation that was originally passed in 1990. The Hate Crimes Statistics Act requires the Department of Justice to collect data on crimes that show evidence of prejudice based on religion, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or disability. Information collected under the law is essential in identifying how law enforcement should focus its resources in dealing with hate crimes.

The 1990 bill required the collection of data for five years. That period expired in December of last year. It had been hoped that the new bill would be permanent and that the Justice Department would be permanently required to gather statistics on hate crimes. However, leaders in the House of Representatives succeeded in limiting it to a period of six years from now.

Bloodsports and AIDS

Continued from page 5

HIV. This would hold true for dentists, doctors, athletes, or musicians. Why, then, is boxing singled out for this type of testing, despite the fact that there is no information available that would indicate that HIV has ever been transmitted from one boxer to another as a result of activity during training or the course of a boxing match?

The legislation currently being sponsored by the Athletic Commission clearly does not directly mandate HIV testing for boxers. However, it clearly does require that a boxer provide evidence of a negative HIV status. This whole concept of requiring HIV-negative status in order for boxers to fight may be moot because of the Americans with Disabilities Act. As in the areas of employment, under the ADA applicants or licensees may not be denied or restricted in their ability to practice or engage in their profession because they have a disability, as long as they can perform the essential functions of their profession with (or without) reasonable accommodation.

If A.B. 2472 does become law, it is just one step closer to the big threat of mandatory testing. Is this truly a situation in which the threat to public health genuinely outweighs the right to privacy? There may be no solid answer to this question, but it certainly sets the stage for healthy debate.

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Make no mistake, this is not just a frivolous promotion in support of fun and games. We are now engaged in a titanic struggle with the religious political extremists who stalk and swagger across our land. We face a world in which open bigotry has again become fashionable. For example, note how easily the so called "Defense of Marriage Act" passed the House of Representatives in late June. Legislators and other elected officials are stoking the fires of prejudice among the public in the hopes of riding a wave of prejudice into public office. To combat these evils, it is absolutely essential that Lambda Letters and similar organizations grow and become very much larger and more effective.

One of the things most likely to gain the attention of an elected official is huge volumes of mail from constituents taking one side or another on a public issue. In the first six months of this year, Lambda Letters collected over 32,000 letters. With your help, we have collected over 160,000 letters since our founding. You can be very proud of those accomplishments because you made them happen. But Lambda Letters must grow very much larger to meet the challenges before us more effectively. That takes money. We need to sell Entertainment Books like never before to cover our costs and provide funds for continuing the growth in the number of letters we collect.

Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/ Transgender Analyst Needed

We need a volunteer to help us prepare our monthly articles and sample letters on lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender issues. This volunteer should have good writing skills. He or she will spend about ten hours each month researching possible subjects and composing sample letters and articles for our newsletter. The volunteer would also attend a monthly, two-to-three-hour staff meeting in which each month's subjects are chosen and other important business of the project is accomplished. Staff meetings are held on weekends and rotate between locations in the Sacramento and Oakland areas.

The Project can provide leads on how to find suitable subjects and advice on writing if needed. This is a great opportunity for you to influence the subjects we cover. Please consider volunteering for this important position or help us find the person to do it. A travel allowance can be provided to cover the cost of traveling to and from staff meetings. If you are interested, please send us a note with your letters or call Boyce Hinman at (916) 965-6851. If you have e-mail, you can send a message to LambdaLP@aol.com

The Sacramento Entertainment Books are due to arrive on August 29th and the books for the rest of the state will arrive soon thereafter. They are positively crammed with 2-for-1 and 50%-off coupons, good at restaurants, theaters, hotels, airlines, car rental agencies, and more. All coupons are good as soon as the books are issued.

Help us grow and serve you better by selling Entertainment Books to your friends and neighbors. Please let us know whether you are willing to be a sales representative for Lambda Letters in your neighborhood.

Domestic Violence Update

Continued from page 3

Amendments to the new welfare reform bill are being prepared.

This month's letter addresses yet another domestic violence issue: the increasing number of domestic violence deaths. H.R. 3455 was introduced by Rep. Robert Torricelli (D-NJ) in response to the high incidence of domestic violence fatalities which currently exists in this country. Over 42 percent of murdered women are killed by their intimate male partners. H.R. 3455 would prohibit anyone convicted of a crime involving domestic violence or serious child abuse from buying or possessing a firearm.

A similar bill is also sitting in the Senate. Known as the Domestic Violence Offender Gun Ban, S.B. 1632 was introduced by Senator Frank Lautenberg and is currently in the Senate Committee on the Judiciary. Senator Feinstein, a member on that committee, is a cosponsor on that bill, so we can count on support from both Feinstein and

Boxer for the Senate version, should H.R. 3455 run into trouble in the House.

H.R. 3455 is currently sitting in the Subcommittee on Crime and is expected to be heard around the end of August.

This month's letter is directed to one of the six California representatives sitting on that committee: Carlos Moorhead, Elton Gallegly, Sonny Bono, Howard Berman, Xavier Becerra, and Zoe Lofgren (cosponsor). Please sign this month's letter or write one of your own, urging passage of this important bill. We must do more to stop domestic violence deaths.

For more information about the bill, you can contact the office of either of the four California representatives who have joined on as cosponsors of H.R. 3455: Zoe Lofgren, Robert Matsui, Steve Horn, and Lynn Woolsey. You can also contact Jan Erickson from National NOW at (202) 331-0066 ext. 725 for general information about any of these domestic violence bills.

GARY MILLER

*Robla School Board
Sacramento's first gay elected official*

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Gay Marriage Battle Continues

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California representatives is listed below by party affiliation:

Republicans

Baker, Yes
Bilbray, Yes
Bono, Yes
Calvert, Yes
Campbell, Yes
Cox, Yes
Cunningham, Yes
Doolittle, Yes
Dornan, Yes
Dreier, Yes
Gallegly, Yes
Herger, Yes
Horn, Yes
Hunter, Yes
Kim, Yes
Lewis, Yes
McKeon, Yes
Moorhead, Yes
Packard, Yes
Pombo, Yes
Radanovich, Yes
Riggs, Yes
Rohrbacher, Yes
Royce, Yes
Seastrand, Yes
Thomas, Yes

Democrats

Becerra, No
Beilenson, No
Berman, No
Brown, No
Condit, Yes
Dellums, No
Dixon, No
Dooley, Yes
Eshoo, No
Farr, No
Fazio, Yes
Filner, Yes
Harman, No
Lantos, No
Lofgren, No

Martinez, No
Matsui, No
Millender McDonald, No
Miller, No
Pelosi, No
Roybal-Allard, No
Stark, No
Torres, No
Waters, No
Waxman, No
Woolsey, No

There is some effort being made within the Senate Judiciary Committee to incorporate the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) within DOMA. This strategy is based upon the recognition that DOMA is most likely going to pass and we might as well attach whatever gay-supportive language we can to the bill.

President Clinton has repeatedly stated that he would sign a bill, if in an "acceptable form," prohibiting gay marriage.

At the state level, the Senate Judiciary Committee recently voted 5-0 to pass A.B. 1982 (Knight) on to the Senate Appropriations Committee. A.B. 1982 would prohibit California from recognizing same-gender marriages which are valid in other states. However, the bill was amended significantly in the Senate Judiciary Committee to provide for statewide domestic partnership registration, along with other gay supportive provisions. In response to these amendments, anti-gay conservatives have regrouped and are attacking from another angle. They have gutted and amended a bill by Senator Ray Haynes into the third anti-gay marriage bill to be considered by the state legislature this year. The bill will soon be heard on the Assem-

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Silence is the virtue of fools.

— Francis Bacon (1561-1626)

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Opposing C.C.R.I.

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tional opportunities. The purpose of affirmative action laws is simply to assure that women and minorities have full access to these opportunities. The laws were vigorously enforced during the 1970s, but neglected—and sometimes even opposed—by the federal government during the Reagan-Bush years. By the late 1970s minority employment rose 20 percent compared to the beginning of the decade, and the employment of women by employers with government contracts rose 15 percent, but only 2 percent elsewhere.

Some say that means affirmative action is no longer necessary. The sad fact is that prejudice is still strong in our nation and it still prevents women and minorities from sharing equally in the blessings and benefits of the American dream. Countless studies by organizations as diverse as the Urban Institute, state agencies, the news media, and the U.S. Department of Justice have found that significant levels of prejudice against Hispanics and blacks still exist in the labor market. In studies conducted by the University of Chicago, employers openly admitted that they will not hire black people because they feel that blacks don't want to work, are violent, and prefer public assistance to employment.

Gains have been made. But when government stops enforcing affirmative action, the gains slip away. For example, by the end of the 1970s when affirmative action was vigorously enforced, the average African American college graduate, working year-round and full-time, made 81 percent of his white male counterpart's salary. By the end of the Reagan-Bush years of the 1980s, the African American college graduate was earning only 74 percent of the salary of white male college graduates.

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Couples, Families, Individuals

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Gay Marriage Battle Continues

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bly floor. If it passes in the Assembly, it would have to go back to the Senate to consider the amendments passed in the Assembly.

Lambda Letters has decided to target President Clinton for our lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender issue this month. Because it is an election year and the president considers California to be a crucial state for his campaign, we feel he needs to hear, from us, that we consider the right of lesbians and gays to marry and to be free from discrimination in the workplace to be important issues to us when considering whom to support for president.

Please write to President Clinton to let him know that he should oppose DOMA. Should he indeed intend to sign the bill, he should not consider it as "in an acceptable form" unless it includes the provisions of ENDA.

We have enclosed a sample letter for your use in writing to the president. A personal, handwritten letter is the most effective means of influencing public officials. Also, please take time to write to your state senator and tell them that you're tired of the barrage of antigay marriage bills being introduced in the legislature. Encourage your senator to oppose each of these bills at every opportunity. If you need to find out who your representative is in the senate, please contact us at (916) 965-6851.

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Lambda Letters at the Crossroads

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Usually there is a high rate of turnover in the staff and boards of groups like Lambda Letters. For that reason, most organizations form personnel committees to search for replacements as they are needed. We have no such committee. We simply have too few board and staff members to cover any of these areas. As a result, all of the above gets done, as time permits, by me, the administrator. I have many other tasks, and these important tasks are never adequately covered.

We have a list of 4,000 likely donors who are not members of Lambda Letters. Yet other demands on my time prevent me from regularly sending appeals to this list of people. Donor mailing lists get old if they are not used consistently, because people move, their budgets change, etc. We are very likely losing contributions and destroying the effectiveness of these mailing lists because we don't use them regularly.

This spring I sent out a large number of press releases and e-mail messages seeking new members to enlarge and diversify our board of directors. Although we received preliminary inquiries from eleven people, none of them have yet joined our board. The primary reason is that there were too few of us, spread too thin, to respond adequately to the enquiries. Although some of those responding may not have been seriously interested, those who were got away for lack of proper attention.

The bottom line is that we need more volunteers. There is a critical need for people to serve on our board and help us with fundraising, public information, and in finding additional volunteers to fill vacancies as they occur. Unless we find people to increase the size of our board and in the other functions I have mentioned, we could be in serious difficulty.

Lambda Letters is too important to our community to let it fail. It will not fail if there is anything I can do to prevent it. But I need help! Please consider volunteering with us or helping us find other talented people to do so.

Faithfully yours,

Boyce Hinman
Administrator

Opposing C.C.R.I.

Continued from page 10

Some say that affirmative action forces employers to hire less qualified women or minorities when a white male might be more qualified. If this were true, productivity would go down in these work places. Numerous studies have shown that this has not happened. Nor have white males lost their substantial advantages. White males make up only 37 percent of the adult population, but make up 59 percent of all chief executives, 65 percent of all physicians, 71 percent of all lawyers, and 85 percent of all supervisors in the construction industry. Clearly, affirmative action has not denied white males access to these high-paying jobs. We still need affirmative action. Please support it by opposing the C.C.R.I.!

Lambda Letters Project
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WEDNESDAY

AUGUST 28

FRIDAY

AUGUST 30

SATURDAY

AUGUST 31

SUNDAY

SEPTEMBER 1

AT FACES

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10 a.m. to 6 p.m.



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